

FOLLOW THE LEADER: THE IMPACT OF SITUATIONAL AND ATTITUDINAL
FACTORS ON EMPLOYEE BEHAVIORS

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ABSTRACT

THESIS: Follow the Leader: The Impact of Situational and Attitudinal Factors on Employee Behaviors

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Racial microaggressions in the workplace have been associated with negative employee outcomes, including risk for poor mental health and decreased work productivity. Leadership has been shown to influence a positive climate of diversity and impact pro-social workplace behaviors. However, it is not known what effect leadership style has on bystander confrontation behaviors. Thus, the present study examined whether 1) perceptions of diversity climate would mediate the relationship between leadership style and intent to confront microaggressive remarks, and whether 2) individual's attitudes about the acceptability of microaggressions would moderate the relationship between leadership style and confrontation intention. One-hundred and seventy-four adults aged 18-65 years ($M=30.7$, 76% female) completed an online survey measuring perceptions of their supervisor, the diversity climate, confrontation intention and general attitudes about the acceptability of color-evasive racial microaggressions. Results from the PROCESS add-on for SPSS (Hayes, 2018) showed that transformational leadership style predicted a more positive diversity climate than transactional leadership style. However, the indirect effect of leadership style on confrontation intention through diversity climate, was nonsignificant. Additionally, participant's acceptance of color-evasive microaggressions did not moderate the relationship between leadership style and confrontation intention. However, given

the mixed effects of the manipulation, exploratory analyses were conducted using regression analyses. Results revealed that after accounting for leadership style, greater acceptability of racial microaggressions significantly predicted less confrontation intentions. These findings provide support for the predictive nature of leadership style on diversity climate and contribute to bystander intervention literature. The findings suggest that increasing transformational leadership may be an effective strategy for increasing a positive climate for diversity and subsequent employee outcomes. Additionally, future studies should examine whether decreasing the perceived acceptability of racial microaggressions in bystander intervention training contributes to an increase in confrontation behaviors.

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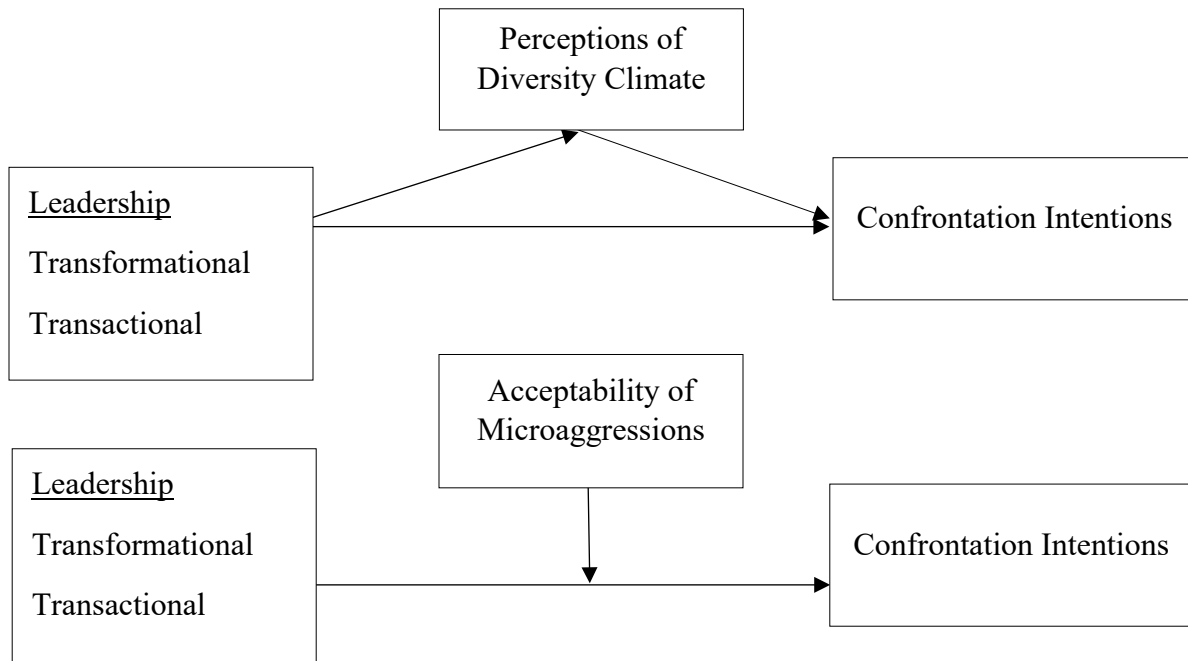
Follow the Leader: Impact of Situational and Attitudinal Factors on Employee Behaviors

Racial discrimination is a prevalent experience among visible, racial, and ethnic minorities in the United States, with up to 25% experiencing interpersonal discrimination attributed to race, ethnicity, or ancestry, and up to 60% experiencing at least some form of discrimination (Cauasadias & Korous, 2019). Given the prevalence of discrimination (Swim et al., 2001, 2003) and the emotional discomfort (Schmader et al., 2012) that results in witnessing or experiencing discrimination, individuals should be motivated to mitigate the occurrence of it. However, acts of racism and discrimination have shifted from overt acts and remarks to more subtle and implicit messages, known as *modern racism* (Sue et al., 2008). Acts of modern racism are often relayed in the form of racial microaggressions and can be much more difficult to combat. Thus, bystanders are less inclined to intervene or even express their dissatisfaction with perpetrators of modern racism (Sue et al., 2008).

Bystander intervention research suggests that various situational factors such as the perceived responsibility to act and the potential costs of intervening, work together to predict bystander behaviors (Mekwai & Todd, 2018). Within work settings, bystanders and targets must evaluate whether their workplace diversity climate will enable them to confront racial discrimination. Diversity climate is often characterized as an organization's openness towards and appreciation of diversity, utilization of fair policies, and predicted consequences of various forms of workplace harassment and discrimination (Goyal & Shrivastava, 2013). Thus, a positive climate for diversity would convey to employees that their workplace is intolerant of workplace discrimination and harassment, and a negative climate for diversity would have the opposite effect (Chin, 2009). At the workgroup level, supervisors often reflect the organizational climate and determine what types of behaviors are and are not rewarded. Organizations often emphasize

the value of engaging in transformational leadership styles (Arenas, 2017) and look to uphold a standard of diversity and inclusion within the workplace. Based on this form of leadership and the standards set before them, subordinates should feel enabled to confront acts of modern racism. Yet, ethnic, and racial minorities continue to report experiences of modern racism in the workplace that have resulted in negative work outcomes (Prieto et al., 2016).

However, even in environments where leaders empower individuals to confront acts of modern racism, it is important to consider individual factors and how they function within a work environment. When it comes to the confrontation of prejudice, bystander behaviors are not only predicted by situational factors, such as the perceived “emergency” of the act, but also by an individual’s beliefs about the acceptability of those remarks/actions (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). Individuals with a greater belief in the unacceptability of racial microaggressions have been associated with a greater willingness to openly disagree with a perpetrator (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). No research to date has examined the role of leadership styles in contributing to a climate of diversity in which individuals feel empowered to confront acts of modern racism. Therefore, the present study examines the interplay between situational factors based on leadership style, as well as attitudinal factors, and whether they predict bystander’s confrontation intentions. Figure 1 provides a model of the proposed relationships being examined in the present study.

Figure 1*Conceptual Model of Hypothesized Relationships***Literature Review**

The present study focuses specifically on behavioral and transformational theories of leadership. Bass' leadership model (1985) proposes a three-dimensional model of leadership styles and is composed of *transactional*, *transformational*, and *laissez-faire* leadership styles. However, only transactional, and transformational leadership styles will be assessed in the present study given the extensive research linking aspects of the two styles to various employee outcomes (e.g., Avolio & Bass, 2004; Podsakoff et al., 2000).

Transactional leadership concentrates more on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers and it is focused on helping followers fulfill self-interests (Bass, 1999; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Transactional leaders emphasize extrinsic rewards, tend to avoid risks, focus on efficiency, and aim to motivate individuals through contractual agreements (Bass, 1985;

Jung et al., 2008; Levy et al., 2002). This leadership style is composed of three dimensions: a) contingent reward, b) management-by-exception passive, and c) management-by-exception active. Contingent rewards are rewards in exchange for the follower's efforts to satisfy organizational goals (Bass, 1985) and includes clarification of expectations to obtain rewards and motivational incentives (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Management-by-exception active refers to the degree to which leaders monitor followers for mistakes and violations, and is done by monitoring follower's behaviors, predicting potential problems, and taking action before these behaviors or events occur (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). On the other hand, management-by-exception passive refers to the leaders who are inactive and wait for mistakes and errors to occur before taking corrective action (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Conversely, *transformational leadership* is composed of four components often referred to as the "4 I's": a) idealized influence, b) inspirational motivation, c) individualized consideration, and d) intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders engage in idealized influence when they embody the qualities that they want their team to possess. They inspire and motivate their followers through the possession and communication of a vision (this is also defined as charisma). Individualized consideration involves a demonstration of true concern for the needs and feelings of one's followers and a desire to help them reach their fullest potential. Finally, transformational leaders engage in intellectual stimulation when they challenge their followers to be creative, innovative and challenge the status-quo.

Transformational leadership has been shown to influence outcomes, including job involvement, group cohesion and performance (Bass et al., 2003), conflict management styles among managers (Saeed et al., 2014), organizational commitment (Bass & Avolio, 1994), organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000), and turnover intention and extra

effort (Seltzer & Bass, 1990). Additionally, all four dimensions of transformational leadership are positively correlated with leadership effectiveness (Erkutlu, 2008) and result in performance beyond expectation, and organizational success (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Leadership and Organizational Climate

Leaders are responsible for influencing (Ostroff et al., 2012) and maintaining organizational climates (e.g., Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989; Lewin et al., 1939; Rentsch, 1990). Organizational climate is measured using an aggregation of individual perceptions (Yahyagil, 2006) regarding the shared meanings associated with policies, practices, and procedures that employees experience, and the behaviors that are expected, supported, and rewarded (Ostroff et al., 2003; Schneider et al. 2011; Schneider et al., 2013; Schneider & Reichers, 1983).

Leadership has often been viewed as an antecedent of climate and even a dimension of climate (Schneider et al., 2011). Specifically, within the workplace, transformational leadership has also been shown to predict diversity climate (George et al., n.d.) and leaders who engage in transformational leadership styles have been associated with positive employee outcomes such as store-level service climate and service climate (Liao & Chuang, 2007).

The present study relies on a strategic conceptualization of climate, where it is conceived as a “climate for” something (Ostroff et al., 2012). Conceptualizing climate in this way allows it to be directly linked to a specific, strategic criterion or outcome (Ostroff et al., 2012). Specifically, the present study assesses leadership styles as an antecedent of a climate for diversity, where a positive or negative climate for diversity is directly linked to the extra-role, prosocial organizational behavior of confronting or not confronting witnessed implicit discrimination in the workplace.

Diversity climate is operationally defined as a reflection of shared employee perceptions regarding, "...the extent to which the organization and/or workgroup successfully promotes fairness and the elimination of discrimination through the fair implementation of personnel practices, the adoption of diversity-specific practices aimed at improving employment outcomes for underrepresented employees, and/or strong norms for fair interpersonal treatment" (Dwertmann et al., 2016, p. 16). This is often characterized as an organization's openness towards and appreciation of diversity, utilization of fair policies, and predicted consequences of various forms of workplace harassment and discrimination (Goyal & Shrivastava, 2013). Thus, a positive climate for diversity would convey to employees that their workplace is intolerant of workplace discrimination and harassment (Chin, 2009). In contrast, a negative climate for diversity would convey tolerance for discrimination and harassment within the workplace (Chin, 2009).

Shared perceptions of organizational climates strengthen the impact of climate on employee's attitudes and behaviors (Dwertmann et al., 2016). For example, a positive diversity climate has been shown to be significantly related to job satisfaction and inclusion (Hofhuis et al., 2016). While a negative diversity climate has been shown to be significantly related to turnover intentions among managers (McKay et al., 2007), and commitment and turnover intention among managers and non-management positions (Madera et al., 2013). Given the relationship between transformational leadership and diversity climate, it is likely that individuals exposed to transformational leadership will report a more positive diversity climate than those exposed to the transactional leader.

However, several barriers inhibit the development of diversity climate within the workplace, including discontinuity between organizational policy and practice regarding

diversity issues, and inequitable practices in hiring, promotions and job placements based on race and gender (Allison, 1999). One barrier that inhibits the development and maintenance of a positive climate for diversity is the ability to properly confront and address issues of racial discrimination within the workplace. Unfortunately, the ability of an individual to formally label behaviors as “discrimination” has become increasingly difficult and complex. Researchers in the field of employment discrimination state that the objective standards that organizations rely on to definitively determine whether discrimination has occurred are typically lacking (Major & Kaiser, 2008). These standards become even more complex when attempting to discern and confront more subtle and implicit forms of racial discrimination. Thus, perpetrators of subtle and implicit forms of racial discrimination may not be held accountable by supervisors or leaders and require confrontation at the peer-to-peer level.

Microaggressions as a Construct

While members of minority and marginalized groups still experience overt and explicit racism within and beyond the workplace, much of the current discrimination that is experienced is expressed in the form of microaggressions. Microaggressions are “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’” (Pierce et al., 1978). Specifically, racial microaggressions are “subtle insults (verbal, non-verbal, and/or visual) directed towards people of color, often automatically or unconsciously” (Solorzano et al., 2000). It is important to note that researchers have been critical of microaggressions as a construct. This is because, like other psychological constructs, microaggressions are seemingly an open concept marked by unclear boundaries (Lilienfeld, 2020). Specifically, microaggression research has been confronted with lacking guidance regarding how to weigh contextual considerations, lacking evidence of the interrater reliability of judgements of microaggressions and lacking interrater

reliability of implicit messages associated with microaggressions among minority individuals (Lilienfeld, 2017).

However, researchers have combated these critiques about the legitimacy of microaggressions (Syed et al., 2018; Williams, 2019). First, operationalized definitions of microaggressions vary because they are context dependent (Sue et al., 2007) and require an intersectional lens to understand that they are not defined by exact behavior or words (Williams, 2019). By definition, microaggressions are caused and perpetuated by socially conditioned racial biases and prejudices because microaggressions are and have been bound by their contributions to structures of oppression and marginalization (Williams, 2019). While there is still some variability, there is consistent agreement that microaggressions are unacceptable (Torres et al., 2020; Williams, 2019) because of the ways in which they are used to reinforce pathological stereotypes, reify power structures, and justify legitimized myths about the disparities experienced by oppressed groups (Williams, 2019). Finally, from a systemic perspective, journals place a strong emphasis on publishing work that presents causal processes, which is impossible to provide in microaggression research since it is still in the early stages of research and development. Relatedly, the historical lack of inclusion of constructs relevant to minority populations has led to disparities in research due to dominant practices in journal publications that serve to overlook, silence, and dismiss knowledge produced by and for racial/ethnic minorities (Syed et al., 2018). Although the current study does not aim to directly address the criticisms posited by Lilienfeld (2017), it is important to acknowledge the continued debate about the validity of microaggression research programs and seek to understand how microaggressions influence aspects of everyday life.

Microaggressions

Microaggression research programs have identified three overarching types of microaggressions: microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007). However, the present study only focuses on the confrontation of microinsults and microinvalidations. Microinsults are rather subtle, “hidden” messages to the target that convey insensitivity and demean an individual’s racial heritage (Sue et al., 2007). For example, ascription to racially colorblind ideals, such as saying, “I believe the most qualified person should get the job, regardless of race”, or asking a person of color, “How did you get your job?”, suggests underlying messages that people of color may be underqualified and that their obtained position at work is the result of affirmative action or to fill a quota (Sue et al., 2007). On the other hand, microinvalidations are characterized by, “...communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Telling people of color that, “I don’t see color”, or “We are all human beings”, negates their experiences as racial and cultural beings (Helms, 1992). A more common occurrence of microinvalidations can be seen when Asian Americans, born and raised in the United States, are complimented on their ability to speak English (Sue et al., 2007).

Racial Microaggressions in the Workplace

The law forbids discrimination and harassment due to an individual’s race or color in all aspects of employment. It is illegal to have policies and practices that negatively impact the employment of people or that are not job-related or necessary to the operation of the business (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission). Yet ethnic and racial minorities continue to report work climates as hostile, invalidating and insulting because of microaggressions (Constantine et al., 2008; DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2016; Pittman, 2012). Organizationally,

experiences with microaggressions are associated with lower work productivity and detrimentally impact recruitment/hiring, retention, and promotion (Hinton, 2004; Rowe, 1990; Sue, Lin & Rivera, 2009, as cited by Prieto et al., 2016). Moreover, employees who experience chronic microaggressions are likely to experience symptoms of anxiety, paranoia, depression, sleep difficulties, diminished confidence, and persistent overgeneralizations of negative experiences (Holder et al., 2015 as cited by Prieto et al., 2016).

Witnessing ethnic discrimination as a bystander has also been associated with poor occupational, psychological, and physical health (Nelson et al., 2011). In a study examining ethnic discrimination in the workplace, researchers found that across three studies, knowledge of other people's ethnic harassment (witnessed or unwitnessed and differentiated from personal experiences as targets) was associated with "deleterious occupational, health-related, and psychological consequences beyond those accounted for by direct harassment and affective disposition" (Low et al., 2007, p. 2261). Furthermore, individuals who were targets and who knew of or witnessed ethnic harassment were associated with the worst outcomes (Low et al., 2007). The negative consequences associated with bystander and target experiences of microaggressions, coupled with organizational policies and practices designed to combat discrimination in the workplace, ultimately contribute to perceptions of an organizations climate for diversity, and likely contribute to their willingness confront microaggressions within the workplace.

Confrontation and Responsibility: The CPR Model

Confronting overt discrimination and microaggressions within and outside of the workplace comes with many costs and benefits. For bystanders, confronting discriminatory acts or remarks has been associated with personal satisfaction as a result of challenging racism,

potentially educating perpetrators or altering perpetrator behaviors (Stewart et al., 2014).

However, bystanders are also burdened with a desire to avoid the adverse social consequences of intervening due to a fear or risk of reprisal, especially in situations where the incident is not typically deemed serious enough to warrant action (Stewart et al., 2014). These situations often include microaggressive acts or remarks, prejudiced jokes, and stereotypes (Stewart et al., 2014).

For targets, confronting discrimination is associated with empowerment, decreased anger, and increased well-being (Foster, 2013; Good et al., 2012). However, targets are also burdened with the social consequences that may follow the confrontation (Kutlaca et al., 2019). Many targets risk confirming pre-existing negative stereotypes about their groups (Dodd et al., 2001), being perceived as complainers and as hypersensitive (Kaiser & Miller, 2001, 2004), or as overreacting (Czopp & Monteith, 2003). Additionally, some targets do not believe that confrontation is effective (Louis et al., 2016). These adverse social and psychological consequences for confronting discrimination may discourage targets from confronting microaggressions when they experience them and render their confrontation ineffective.

Thus, the burden to confront ultimately befalls bystanders. However, the act of confronting racial microaggressions within the workplace and at a peer-to-peer level is best conceptualized as an extra-role, prosocial organizational behavior. Prosocial organizational behavior, as defined by Brief and Motowidlo (1986), is a behavior that is “(a) performed by a member of an organization, (b) directed toward an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she interacts with while carrying out his or her organizational role, and (c) performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organization toward which it is directed” (p.71). The decision to confront or not confront a racial microaggressions is an extra-role because it can be a positive social act that is not formally specified or assigned to individuals

as an activity to be performed as part of their job (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), that is performed with the intention of promoting individual, group, and organizational welfare. Given the subtle nature of racial microaggressions, bystanders and targets may be less inclined to confront which helps to maintain positive social relationships within a workgroup. However, the decision to not confront may also negatively impact the work ability of the target and bystanders as discussed above. Leadership style and organizational climate are contextual antecedents that might impact the incidence of prosocial organizational behaviors and influence prosocial acts towards individuals, which in turn positively impacts the organization (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). The intent of the present study is not to directly measure prosocial organizational behaviors. However, conceptualizing the confrontation of racial microaggression in this way highlights the impact that it can have on organizational climate for diversity and connects this behavior to the role that leaders play in dictating and maintain organizational climate.

The Confronting Prejudiced Responses (CPR) model provides several factors that predict the likelihood that an individual will confront observed or experienced discrimination (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008). Drawing from classic social-psychological research on bystander intervention (Latane & Darley, 1970), Ashburn-Nardo et al. (2008) posits that people face at least five barriers when confronting discrimination including: interpreting the incident as discrimination, deciding whether it is egregious enough to warrant confrontation (i.e., deciding that it is an emergency), taking responsibility for confronting, deciding how to confront, and taking action. Of these five hurdles, perceived responsibility for confronting has been implicated as the key motivator in confrontation intention (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008). Perceived responsibility is often examined in reference to personal responsibility to confront (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014, 2019) relative to others within a group context. Whereas confrontation

intention often refers to hypothetical or actual situations in which individuals are assessed on whether they would engage in the action of confrontation if given the opportunity to do so (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014, 2019).

Perceived responsibility to confront and confrontation intentions are typically examined within the context of power. For example, in a study looking to examine whether people view status-based authority figures, targets or other bystanders as responsible for confronting a witnessed prejudicial remark, participants viewed status-based authority figures as most responsible for responding and reported feeling less personally responsible when authority figures and targets were present (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019). Given the interpersonal nature of confrontation, researchers have begun to rely on social power and its relation to the power-as-approach theory (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). According to this theory, having power over others is associated with disinhibited behavior (Keltner et al., 2003, as cited in Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014), while powerlessness, a consequence of being/feeling powerless, is associated with inhibitory effects, negative emotions, increased sensitivity to threat and punishment, sensitivity to evaluation and scrutiny, and situationally constrained behaviors (Keltner et al., 2003, as cited in Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). This suggests that at the peer-to-peer level, bystanders of racial discrimination may experience a sense of neutralized power when the perpetrator is someone of equal power; thus, increasing their intent to confront.

Furthermore, while perceived responsibility for confronting has been implicated as the key motivator in confrontation intentions (Ashburn-Nardo, 2008), perceived responsibility does not actually increase confrontation intention (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). In a study that examined one's perceived responsibility to confront and confrontation intentions, Ashburn-Nardo et al. (2014) instructed participants to imagine witnessing a prejudiced remark (sexism v.

racism) perpetrated by a supervisor (higher-power), coworker (equal-power), or subordinate (lower-power) at work. Participants responded to questions that assessed their confrontation intentions and potential mediators of the perpetrators power. Results showed that participants were significantly less likely to report confrontation intentions when the perpetrator of the prejudiced remark was higher (vs. equal or lower) in power than the target, and this effect was partially mediated by participants' perceived responsibility for intervening (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). Meaning, participant's feelings of powerlessness relative to the perpetrator's position of power heightened their perceptions of confrontation obstacles (including perceived responsibility to confront) and decreased their intent to confront the perpetrator.

Currently, a gap exists in confrontation research when it comes to examining the intent to confront racial microaggressions. Typically, research on the confrontation of racism and prejudice involves measuring perceived responsibility to confront and/or the confrontation intentions of explicit acts or remarks, as opposed to more subtle acts or remarks. Furthermore, studies that have examined the confrontation of microaggressions typically only assess differences in perceptions of racial confrontation (Zou & Dickter, 2013). For example, in one study, researchers looked to examine the influence of colorblindness and the ambiguity of a prejudiced remark on perceptions of a racial minority group member who confronts the remark. Zou and Dickter (2013) had White participants respond to a vignette depicting a White character making a prejudice comment of variable ambiguity. After the prejudiced comment of variable ambiguity, a Black target character confronted the comment. Results demonstrated that in that case of confronting a microinvalidation, target confronters (a Black target character) are perceived more negatively and as responding less appropriately by White bystanders (Zou & Dickter, 2013) and are likely to be evaluated negatively. Theoretically, if target confronters of

microinvalidations are perceived more negatively by White bystanders, it is likely that those bystanders would be less inclined to confront if given the opportunity to do so.

Thus, the present aims to address a gap in the literature by going beyond measuring perceptions of bystanders and the confrontation of explicit prejudicial remarks. Instead, the present study aims to examine bystander's intentions to confront ambiguous prejudicial statements in the form of microaggressions and examine how individuals in positions of leadership influence the environment in such a way that bystanders feel more inclined to confront. Given the aforementioned risks and consequences associated with target confrontation, bystanders are often left with the responsibility to confront. Unfortunately, bystanders are not immune to the social consequences of engaging in peer-to-peer confrontation, especially when it requires addressing a subtle act or remark. However, leadership style and organizational climate are contextual antecedents that have the potential to impact the incidence of prosocial organizational behaviors and influence prosocial acts towards individuals, which in turn positively impacts the organization (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). Accordingly, given the negative effects that racial microaggressions have on the development and maintenance of a positive climate for diversity, leaders are responsible creating an environment that enables individuals to address issues of racial discrimination within the workplace. Therefore, I hypothesized the following relationships between leadership style, diversity climate and confrontation intention:

H₁: Perceptions of the diversity climate will mediate the relationship between leadership style and the intent to confront racial microaggressive remarks.

Specifically, I predict that transformational leadership will be associated with a more positive climate for diversity than transformational leadership would. Secondly, I predicted that a positive climate for diversity will be positively associated with confrontation intention. Third, I predicted

that transformational leadership will be positively associated with greater confrontation intention than transactional leadership would.

Individual Factors that Affect Confrontation

Microaggression research programs have examined how individualized factors, like racial colorblindness (Mekawi & Todd, 2018; Neville et al., 2000; Torres et al., 2020), personal experiences of racial microaggressions (Mekawi & Todd, 2018; Nadal, 2011), ethnocultural empathy (Wang et al., 2003), and social desirability (Crowne & Marlow, 1960; Reynolds, 1982) impact responses to microaggressions. Mekawi and Todd (2018) offer that racial microinsults are often viewed as acceptable because they work to maintain hierarchy-enhancing ideologies that establish dominance and superiority over a particular outgroup. Additionally, some might believe that engaging in other forms of microinsults are acceptable because they are delivered with the intent to compliment rather than dehumanize racial and ethnic minorities (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). Similarly, microinvalidations can be seen as more acceptable because they reflect a desire to be maintain and legitimize the status quo by evading the consequences of systemic racism. Conversely, individuals might engage in microinvalidations because they view it as a genuine form of antiracism (Mekawi & Todd, 2018).

As posited by the CPR model, the first barrier to confronting is the ability to interpret an incident as discrimination (Ashburn-Nardo, 2008). Thus, the ability to address microaggressions not only requires some understanding of what microaggressions are, but also an awareness of personal cultural values and biases (Boysen, 2012). Personal cultural values and biases work to determine whether individuals can make it beyond the first barrier of the CPR model and actually reach the final act of confrontation. Accordingly, the present study looks to examine the

interplay between situational factors based on leadership style, as well as attitudinal factors, and how they might predict bystander's confrontation intentions.

No research to date has examined the relationship between leadership, diversity climate and confrontation intentions within the context of microaggressions. However, Yeo (2006) offers a proposed model of organizational climate in which the construct of organizational climate for diversity affects a variety of individual level outcomes. In her study, Yeo (2006) found that attitudes about diversity moderated the relationship between perceptions of organizational climate for diversity and employee outcomes. These results suggest that when global climate, which she conceptualized as a composition of top management support, teaching equity and fairness, other student's behaviors in classrooms, organizational resources and support, and personal experiences, are low, people reported an unfavorable climate and low rating for satisfaction with diversity (Yeo, 2006). Conversely, when dimensions of global climate are high, individuals reported higher satisfaction with diversity regardless of their attitudes about diversity (Yeo, 2006). These results emphasize the correspondence between an individual's attitude and its impact on the perceptions of the climate (Yeo, 2006). While high dimensions of global climate supersede the effect of attitudes about diversity on employee satisfaction, research suggests that individualized factors still work to predict employee behaviors. For example, in the initial validation of a measure designed to assess people's perceptions of racial microaggressions (Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions, ARMS), Mekawi and Todd (2018) found that individuals with a greater belief in the unacceptability of racial microaggressions (not likely to engage in various microaggressive statements) were much more willing to openly disagree with the perpetrator. Thus, a final objective of the current study is to assess whether attitudes about

the acceptability of engaging in racial microaggressions moderates the relationship between leadership and confrontation intention.

H₂: Attitudes about the acceptability of racial microaggressions will moderate the relationship between leadership style and confrontation intention, such that at lower levels of perceived acceptance of racial microaggressions, the effect of leadership style on confrontation intention would be significantly increased.

Specifically, I predicted that transformational leadership will be associated with greater confrontation intention than transactional leadership. Second, I predicted a negative association between individual's attitudes about the acceptance of racial microaggressions and reported confrontation intention.

To examine the role of attitudinal factors, the present study used the ARMS (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). The ARMS is composed of four composited types of microaggressions including Victim Blaming, Exoticizing, Power Evasion and Color Evasion (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). Victim blaming involves microaggressions that are used to denigrate and blame racial and ethnic minorities, and cultures for racial disparities. Exoticizing involves the benevolent objectification and/or sexualization of racial and ethnic minorities who deviate from the Eurocentric beauty standards in an effort to dehumanize them (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). Power Evasion appears to be rooted in Victim Blaming, which aims to maintain traditional values and does not acknowledge racism as a cause for racial disparities but are seemingly more acceptable to say. Mekawi and Todd (2018) offer that Power Evasion only denies the role of racism but does not provide rationale for racial disparities. Lastly, Color Evasion seeks to avoid the acknowledgement of race and ethnicity, and it is rooted in prejudicial and colorblind ideologies (Mekawi & Todd, 2018).

Present Study

The primary method for assessing confrontation typically involves the use of self-report measures or open-ended responses that measure intent to confront (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019). Similarly, measurement of microaggressive statements typically involves the use of self-report measures and open-ended responses that allow for greater documentation of individual interpretations of microaggressions and their emotional, psychological, and physiological effect. Based on the findings that leadership may be an antecedent of diversity climate which may predict individual confrontation of racial discrimination, the purpose of the present study was to examine confrontation intention based on the influence of leadership style on individual perceptions of the diversity climate. Additionally, the present study examined whether an individual's attitudes about the acceptability of microaggressions moderates the relationship between leadership style and the intent to confront microaggressions.

Method

Participants

A total of 317 participants (46 from the Ball State University psychological science subject pool; 271 from Reddit, Facebook, and Twitter), completed the online study. However, 120 participants produced invalid test protocols (i.e., completed only the informed consent or less than 90% of the survey). Additionally, 23 participants were excluded from the analysis because they failed the race/ethnicity manipulation check pertaining to the racial microaggression that occurred. It was important that participants took note of the race of the target and the perpetrator to ensure that participants paid attention to the vignette. Thus, the final sample consisted of 174 participants, with 94 participants in the transformational leadership condition and 80 participants in the transactional leadership condition. Descriptive demographic statistics indicated that the sample consisted of adults between the ages of 18-65 years old

($M = 30.7$, $SD = 12.5$). The sample was primarily composed of middle class (58%), European-American (70%), women (76%) with at least a bachelor's degree (42%). Using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007), a sensitivity analysis for the effect of the key manipulation of leadership style on confrontation intention revealed that given a sample size of 174 and an alpha of 0.05, the study had 80% power to detect an effect of leadership style on confrontation intention as small as $d = .38$.

Measures and Stimulus Materials

Scenario. Using a between-subjects, simple experiment design, participants were randomly assigned to one of two leadership conditions (transformational vs transactional). All participants read a hypothetical scenario containing two main components. The first component of the scenario provided participants with a description of their supervisor's leadership style, consistent with transformational or transactional leadership (Christie et al, 2011; Jensen et al., 2019), such as, "Your supervisor is someone who looks to create a vision based on the collective good of their workers and tries to align with the morals and aspirations of their followers" (transformational leadership; See Appendix A). Additionally, the scenarios included directions from their supervisor about an upcoming project in which the supervisor attempted to reflect attributes of their leadership style. After reading the first component, participants were then asked to indicate their perceptions of their supervisor's leadership style and their perception of the diversity climate. Responding to questions about the supervisor helped to ensure that participants paid attention to the leadership style and its impact on their perception of the diversity climate.

Leadership Style. Perceptions of the supervisor's leadership style was measured using Vera and Crossman (2004)'s 18-item questionnaire (see Appendix B). This questionnaire relies

on the Bass' conceptualization of transactional and transformational leadership from an employee's perspective. Employees were asked to give their perception about their managers leadership style on a 5-point Likert scale ($1 = \text{strongly disagree}$; $5 = \text{strongly agree}$). Items on the transformational leadership scale were internally consistent ($\alpha = .88$) and measured inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Vera & Crossman, 2004). In the current study, the transformational leadership scale had a high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.93$) and included statements such as, "Makes everyone around them enthusiastic about assignments", "I have complete faith in them", and "Encourages me to express my ideas and opinions." Higher mean scores on this scale indicated a greater perception of a transformational leadership style. In Vera and Crossman's (2004) sample, items on the transactional scale were internally consistent ($\alpha = 0.76$) and measured contingent rewards, active management-by-exception, and management-by-exception passive. In the current study, the transactional scale had a lower reliability ($\alpha = 0.58$). Sample items included, "Tells me what to do if I want to be rewarded for my efforts", "There is a close agreement between what I am expected to put into the group effort and the benefit I can get out of it", and, "Whenever I feel like it, I can negotiate with them about what I can get from what I accomplish". Mean scores were computed for each subscale, with higher mean scores indicating that participants perceived the leader as more transformational or more transactional.

Perceptions of the Diversity Climate. Perceptions of the diversity climate was measured using a modified version of the 4-item Diversity Climate Scale (McKay et al., 2008, Appendix C). The original scale was used to assess employee perceptions of their company's diversity climate. Scale items included "I trust [the Company] to treat me fairly," "[The Company] maintains a diversity-friendly work environment", "[The Company] respects the views of people

like me,” and “Top leaders demonstrate a visible commitment to diversity.” The four-item diversity climate scale has demonstrated a high internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.80$) and overlaps with items from various diversity climate scales used to assess fair treatment (Robertson, 2006; as cited in McKay et al., 2008), organizational fairness (Mor Barak et al., 1998; as cited in McKay et al., 2008) and overt discrimination subscales (Hegarty & Dalton, 1995; as cited in McKay et al., 2008). In the current study, the diversity climate scale had a high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.91$). Participants used a five-point Likert scale ($1 = \text{strongly disagree}$; $5 = \text{strongly agree}$). Higher mean scores on this scale indicated perceptions of a greater pro-diversity work climate. In the present study, all mentions of “the Company” and “Top leaders” were replaced with “my supervisor” to assess participants’ perceptions of the leader’s impact on the diversity climate.

In the second component of the scenario, participants were prompted to read a hypothetical conversation between their peers in which a color-evasive, racial microaggression occurred between a White and an African American coworker (see Appendix D). Participants were then asked a series of manipulation check/forced comprehension questions (see Appendix E) to ensure that they read and understood the exchanges, including “What are the names of the people in your group?” Next, participants were asked to complete questions designed to measure their intention to confront. Additionally, participants were asked to rate the acceptability of racial microaggressions. To minimize order effects, half of the participants completed the ARMS before the start of the two-part scenario and half completed the ARMS after.

Confrontation Intention. Confrontation intention was assessed in two ways. First, a subset of items that focused on willingness to directly confront the perpetrator were used from a measure designed to capture various aspects of the CPR Model (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2008;

2014). The items included, “I would talk to my co-worker about the behavior”, “I would do nothing in this situation”, and “I would tell an authority about my coworker’s behavior.”

Participants used a seven-point Likert scale ($1 = \text{strongly disagree}$; $7 = \text{strongly agree}$) and higher average scores indicated greater confrontation intentions. Items measuring willingness to directly confront the perpetrator ($\alpha = 0.65$) have been shown to be acceptably reliable (see Appendix F). In the current study, items measuring confrontation intention showed moderate reliability

($\alpha = 0.58$). To maintain the integrity of the measure, the entire measure was administered.

However, the analysis only used the three items from this subscale.

Second, in addition to measuring the likelihood of confronting, a single item was created to assess whether or not participants intended to confront. They were asked to select either “yes” or “no” to the question, “[Perpetrator’s name] is the last to leave the group meeting. Would you stop and talk to [perpetrator’s name] about the conversation between [the perpetrator’s name] and [the target’s name]?”. This dichotomous measure was not used in the analysis and was purely exploratory.

Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions. Attitudes about the acceptability of racial microaggressions was measured using the 34-item Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions Scale (ARMS; see Appendix G). Participants used a 6-point Likert type scale ($1 = \text{totally unacceptable}$; $6 = \text{perfectly acceptable}$) to indicate how acceptable they believe it is to engage in various microaggressive behaviors and/or make microaggressive statements to a racially diverse group of peers. This scale measured four distinct factors including: (a) Victim Blaming (e.g., If African Americans spoke less slang, they’d be more likely to get jobs); (b) Exoticizing (e.g., Latino men are such passionate lovers); (c) Power Evasion (e.g., Everyone has access to the same

educational opportunities, regardless of race or ethnicity; and (d) Color Evasion (e.g., I don't see race, I see you as a person). Each subscale of the ARMS is internally consistent ($\alpha = 0.92 - 0.94$) and stable over-time (Victim Blaming $r = 0.80$, Color Evasion $r = 0.86$, Power Evasion $r = 0.81$ and Exoticizing $r = 0.77$). In the current study, the Color Evasion subscale had a high internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$). The entire measure was administered to maintain the integrity of the measure, but only the Color Evasion subscale was used in the analysis as it is the scale with the most variability and coincided with the microaggression described in the vignette. Scale items were presented randomly to participants in accordance with the studies used to determine the psychometric properties of this measure (Mekawi & Todd, 2018). A mean score was used to determine the acceptability of racial microaggressions, with higher mean scores indicative of a greater acceptability of engaging in microaggressions and/or saying micro-aggressive statements.

Demographics. To provide an accurate description of the sample, participants were asked demographic questions, including their age, racial/ethnic background, current level of education, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status (see Appendix H).

Procedures

Upon obtaining university IRB approval, an online questionnaire was made available to students in the Ball State University (BSU) Psychological Science subject pool. Participants were also recruited from the Reddit and Facebook. Inclusion criteria restricted participation to individuals aged 18 and older. Participants in the Psychological Science subject pool were compensated with 0.5 class research credit for their participation and all other participants received no compensation.

Individuals were directed to a Qualtrics survey where they reviewed the informed consent information (see Appendix I) and verified their age. Given that the ARMS asked questions

related to racial microaggressions, it is possible that those questions may have primed individuals given the ARMS measure before the vignettes. Therefore, those who chose to consent were randomly selected to either complete the ARMS prior to the scenario portion or after the scenario portion to control for the potential order effect of the ARMS on the scenario. Participants were then prompted to read a hypothetical vignette in which the supervisors leadership traits were listed. Additionally, in the vignette the supervisor provided directions on an upcoming task, and demonstrated behaviors reflecting their respective leadership style. Participants were then asked to rate their perceptions of their supervisor's leadership style to ensure that participants paid attention to the leadership styles. Next, participants were asked to provide their perceptions of the diversity climate. After providing their perceptions of their supervisor's leadership style and their perception of the diversity climate, participants were prompted to read a hypothetical scenario about a group interaction involving a color-evasive racial microaggression. Upon their completion of the manipulation check, participants were then be asked to complete questions designed to measure their intention to confront using the CPR measure and single "yes/no" item. Finally, participants were then asked to provide demographic information, and reviewed the end of survey message (see Appendix J).

Results

Manipulation Check

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether the leadership style manipulation was effective. Thus, I examined whether individuals in the transformational leadership condition rated their supervisor as more transformational and less transactional than those in the transactional leadership condition. Independent t-tests rely on several assumptions including the assumption of independence, normality, scale of measurement and homogeneity of

variance. The scale of measurement assumption and the assumption of independence were met as the sample was randomly and independently sampled and the dependent variable was measured on a ratio scale. However, based on an evaluation of descriptive analyses, the data displayed negative skew and kurtosis. Furthermore, a Shapiro-Wilk test of normality indicated significant deviation from a normal distribution within the transformational ($p = .034$) and transactional leadership ratings ($p = .026$). Thus, the assumption of normality was not met. However, given the sample size, I did not correct for the nonnormality. Finally, a test of homogeneity of variance revealed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met for both transformational ($p = .064$) and transactional leadership ($p = 0.66$).

Results of the independent samples t-test revealed that there was a significant difference between the scores for transformational leadership ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .65$) and transactional leadership ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .66$) in the transformational leadership condition:

$t(172) = 3.76$, $p = .000$. However, scores for transformational leadership ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .66$) and transactional leadership ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .60$) did not differ in the transactional leadership condition ($p = .198$). These findings indicate that the leadership manipulation was effective for ratings of transformational leadership, but not the ratings of transactional leadership.

Testing the Mediation Model

Mean and standard deviation scores for the variables of interest are shown in Table 1. To test whether perceptions of the diversity climate mediated the relationship between leadership style (Transactional leader condition vs. Transformational leader condition) and intent to confront microaggressive remarks (H_1), the data was submitted to Model 4 of the PROCESS add-on for SPSS (Hayes, 2018). I anticipated that transformational leadership would be positively associated with a positive climate for diversity. Secondly, I anticipated that a positive

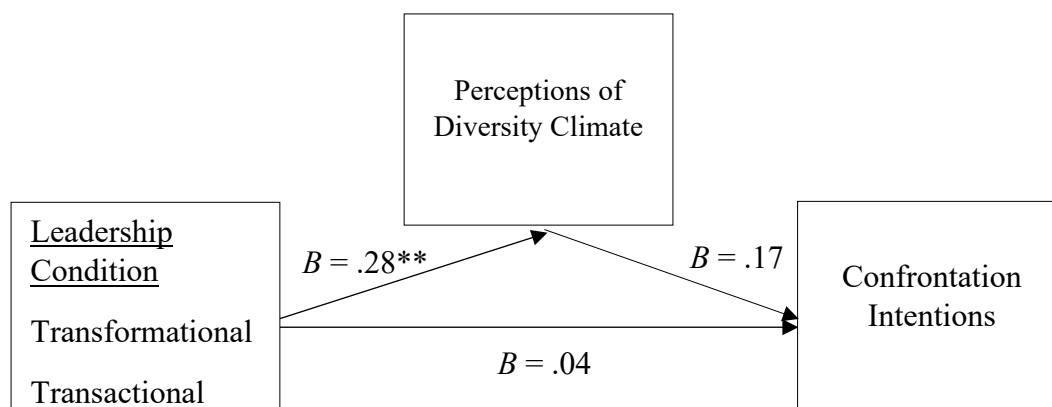
climate for diversity would be positively associated with confrontation intention. Third, I anticipated that transformational leadership would be positively associated with confrontation intention. The regression model showed that leadership condition affected diversity climate ($B = .28$, $t(172) = 4.26$, $p < .001$), but had no further effects on confrontation intention. The total effect of leadership condition on confrontation intention was nonsignificant ($B = .12$, $SE = .11$, 95% CI: $[-.099, .35]$). The direct effect of leadership condition on confrontation intention was nonsignificant ($B = .081$, $SE = .17$, 95% CI: $[-.26, .42]$). The indirect effect of leadership condition on confrontation intention through diversity climate, tested with a bootstrapping method with 5,000 iterations, was nonsignificant ($B = .038$, $SE = .033$, 95% CI: $[-.21, .11]$). Thus, the results supported the first anticipated relationship between transformational leadership and diversity climate; however, results failed to support the remaining anticipated relationship and ultimately hypothesis one (see Figure 2).

Table 1

Sample Statistics by Condition

Dependent variables	Leadership condition		
	Transactional ($n = 80$), M (SD)	Transformational ($n = 94$), M (SD)	Total ($n = 174$), M (SD)
Diversity climate	3.76(0.92)	4.31(0.78)	4.06(0.89)
Confrontation intention	4.83(1.00)	4.71(1.20)	4.75(1.12)
ARMS-Color evasion	3.84(1.50)	3.76(1.60)	3.79(1.60)
Transformational leadership subscale	3.64(0.81)	4.06(0.65)	3.86(0.75)
Transactional leadership subscale	2.80(0.59)	2.92(0.66)	2.86(0.63)

Note. ARMS = Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions Scale.

Figure 2*Diversity Climate Mediation Model*

Note. $p < 0.01^{**}$. Transformational Leadership Condition = 1, Transactional Leadership Condition = -1.

Testing the Moderation Model

To determine whether perceived acceptability of color-evasive microaggression moderates the relationship between leadership style and confrontation intention (H_2), the data was submitted to Model 1 of the PROCESS add-on for SPSS (Hayes, 2018). I anticipated that transformational leadership would predict greater confrontation intention than transactional leadership. Secondly, I anticipated a negative association between individuals' acceptance of racial microaggressions and reported confrontation intention. Only continuous variables that defined products were mean centered for the analysis. The regression analysis indicated a nonsignificant association between transformational leadership and confrontation intention ($B = .095$, $t(169) = .90$, $p = .36$). However, a significant negative association was revealed between color evasion and confrontation intention ($B = -.21$, $t(169) = -4.2$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, results revealed a nonsignificant interaction effect between leadership style and color evasion

($B = -.018$, $t(169) = -.35$, $p = .73$). Thus, the results failed to support the anticipated relationship between leadership condition and confrontation intention. However, the predicted relationship between acceptance of racial microaggressions and confrontation intention was supported. Thus, the results showed that acceptance of racial microaggressions did not moderate the relationship between leadership style and confrontation intention, failing to support hypothesis two.

Exploratory Analyses

Given that the leadership condition manipulation only influenced the transformational leadership ratings, but not the transactional leadership ratings, there may have been issues with the manipulations. To further explore the relevant questions, regression analyses were conducted to examine potential additional effects of the participants ratings of their supervisors on the transformational leadership and transactional leadership measures, after accounting for the leadership condition. First, bivariate correlations were conducted between the study variables (see Table 2). As shown in Table 3, results of the first regression analysis revealed that the leadership condition participants were randomly assigned to accounted for 9.6% of the variance in diversity climate ($R^2 = .096$, $p < 0.001$). After adding in participants' ratings of their supervisors on the transformational leadership and transactional leadership, the leadership condition and measures significantly accounted for 58% of the variance in diversity climate ($R^2 = .580$, R^2 change = $.486$, $p < 0.001$). However, only the ratings of participants' supervisors on the transformational leadership subscale were significant predictors of diversity climate ($B = .86$, $p < 0.001$). Results of the second regression analysis revealed that the leadership condition alone did not significantly predict confrontation intention ($p = .376$). After adding in participants ratings of their supervisors on the transformational leadership and transactional

leadership measure, leadership conditions and leadership measures did not significantly predict confrontation intention ($p = .439$).

Finally, given the significant, negative correlation between confrontation and scores on the ARMS- Color Evasion subscale score noted below, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine this relationship. Results showed that after accounting for the leadership condition, Color Evasion significantly accounted for 9.8% of the variance in confrontation intention ($R^2 = .098, p < 0.001$). Specifically, acceptance of color-evasive racial microaggressions was a moderate, negative predictor of confrontation intention ($\beta = -.21, p < 0.001$).

Table 2

Correlations Between Leadership Scores and Predictor Variables

	Transf. Leadership Scores	Transact. Leadership Scores	Diversity Climate	Confrontation Intention	ARMS- Color Evasion
Transf. Leadership Scores	-	-.233**	.755**	.083	-.011
Transact. Leadership Scores		-	-.154*	-.033	.100
Diversity Climate			-	.079	.032
Confrontation Intention				-	-.307**
ARMS-Color Evasion					-

Note. * $p < 0.05$. $p < 0.01$ **. ARMS-Color Evasion = Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions Scale- Color Evasion subscale. Transf. Leadership Scores = Transformational leadership scores. Transact. Leadership Scores = Transactional leadership scores.

Table 3*Results of Regressions Analysis for Leadership Style Ratings and ARMS-Color Evasion Ratings*

<i>Step</i>	<i>Predictor</i>	<i>Unstandardized coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized coefficients</i>		<i>R²</i>	<i>R²Δ</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>p</i>				
1 ^a						.096	.096	18.23	.000
	Leadership condition	4.035	.065	.310	.000				
						.582	.486	98.75	.000
2	Leadership condition	.097	.047	.109	.039				
	Transformational Leadership scores	.857	.063	.726	.000				
	Transactional Leadership scores	.006	.074	.004	.939				

^a Predictors in the first table predicted diversity climate.

						<i>R²</i>	<i>R²Δ</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 ^b						.005	.005	.788	.376
	Leadership condition	-.076	.086	-.068	.376				
2						.016	.011	.906	.383
	Leadership condition	-.111	.090	-.098	.223				
	Transformational Leadership scores	.165	.122	.111	.180				
	Transactional Leadership scores	.005	.143	.003	.973				

^b Predictors in the second table predicted confrontation intention.

						<i>R²</i>	<i>R²Δ</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 ^c						.003	.003	.479	.490
	Leadership condition	-.058	.084	-.053	.490				
2						.098	.095	9.251	.000
	Leadership condition	-.067	.080	-.061	.405				
	ARMS- Color Evasion scores	-.214	.050	-.309	.000				

Note. *SE* = Standard error of *B*. Leadership condition: -1 = Transactional Leadership, 1 =

Transformational Leadership. Transformational Leadership = Transformational leadership

subscale. Transactional Leadership = Transactional leadership subscale. ARMS-Color Evasion =

Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions- Color Evasion subscale. None of the observed effects

were influenced by the order in which the ARMS-scale was administered. ^c Predictors in the third

table predicted confrontation intention.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to examine whether leadership styles enhance diversity climate and impact peer to peer, bystander confrontation behaviors when a color-evasive racial microaggression occurs. Additionally, the present study sought to assess whether individual factors such as attitudes toward racial microaggressions affect confrontation behaviors when a color-evasive racial microaggression occurs. It was hypothesized that participant's perceptions of the diversity climate would mediate the relationship between leadership style and intent to confront microaggressive remarks. Additionally, it was hypothesized that beliefs about the acceptance of microaggressions would moderate the relationship between leadership style and confrontation intention.

Contrary to the proposed hypotheses, the effect of leadership style on confrontation intention was not mediated by diversity climate, nor was the relationship moderated by participant's perceived acceptability of engaging in color-evasive racial microaggressions. It is likely that no mediating or moderating effect was observed between the relevant variables because the supervisor's leadership style did not directly affect subordinates' intent to confront color-evasive racial microaggressions. There are several possible explanations for why a direct effect was not observed between leadership style and confrontation intention. It is possible that no relationship was observed between the variables because the relationship simply does not exist. However, it is important to note that the effects of the manipulation were mixed given that participants in the transformational leadership condition perceived their supervisors as more transformational than those in the transactional leadership condition. While participants in the two conditions perceived their supervisor as equally transactional. It is possible that participants perceived their supervisor in this manner because although transformational and transactional

leadership are distinct styles of leadership, it can be difficult to differentiate between them (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). For example, transactional leaders are described as being responsive, while transformational leaders are described as being proactive (Odumeru & Ogbonna, 2013). Proactivity and responsiveness can look very similar when responding to a hypothetical situation with no additional points of reference.

However, the present study revealed two important findings. First, exploratory results revealed that leadership style ratings influenced diversity climate. Specifically, transformational leadership style was a strong predictor of diversity climate. Additionally, transactional leaders had a negative impact on individual's perception of the diversity climate. Meaning that when participants perceived their supervisor as having transformational leadership values/behaviors, they perceived the diversity climate more positively. While the opposite effect was found when the individuals perceived their supervisor as having more transactional leadership values/behaviors. Although the relationship between diversity climate and leadership style is understudied, the present study's results support previous research indicating that leadership can function as an antecedent of climate (Schneider et al., 2011). Additionally, the results of this study support the predictive nature of leadership style on diversity climate (George et al., n.d.) Furthermore, it is known that shared perceptions of organizational climates strengthen the impact of climate on employees' attitudes and behaviors (Dwertmann et al., 2016). Thus, results of this study suggest that supervisorial training and diversity training should emphasize transformational leadership techniques such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985) and focus on how these techniques can be used to facilitate a positive climate for diversity. Engaging in transformational leadership not only positively affects the diversity climate but can also improve the workplace generally. For

example, all four dimensions of transformational leadership are positively correlated with leadership effectiveness (Erkutlu, 2008) and result in performance beyond expectation, and organizational success (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Furthermore, transformational leadership has been shown to influence outcomes, including job involvement, group cohesion and performance (Bass et al., 2003), conflict management styles among managers (Saeed et al., 2014), organizational commitment (Bass & Avolio, 1994), organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 2000), and turnover intention and extra effort (Seltzer & Bass, 1990). Therefore, while having a positive diversity climate does not lead employees to confront racial microaggressions, there are still tangible benefits of transformational leadership on organizational success.

The second important finding was that results revealed that after accounting for leadership condition, participants who perceived color-evasive racial microaggressions as less acceptable, were more likely to endorse confrontation intentions when a color-evasive microaggression occurred. This finding goes a step beyond previous research showing that individuals with a greater belief in the unacceptability of racial microaggressions (not likely to engage in various microaggressive statements) are much more willing to openly disagree with the perpetrator (Mekwai & Todd, 2018).

While a causal effect would need to be established between the ARMS- Color Evasion subscale and confrontation intention, the results provide a potential avenue for bias interventions designed to increase confrontation intention by decreasing individual's perceived acceptability of racial microaggressions. As posited by the CPR model, the first barrier to confronting is the ability to interpret an incident as discrimination (Ashburn-Nardo, 2008), and therefore unacceptable. Thus, the ability to address microaggressions not only requires some

understanding of what microaggressions are, but also an awareness of personal cultural values and biases (Boysen, 2012) in order to determine whether individuals can make it beyond the first barrier of the CPR model and actually reach the final act of confrontation. Furthermore, the inability of bystanders to identify racial microaggressions and acknowledge the resulting consequences on the target and the workplace, is likely to contribute to an adverse climate broadly (Torres et al., 2020). Accordingly, organizations should consider providing training to help employees engage in the process of identifying racial microaggressions and educate employees about the adverse effects of racial microaggressions on targets and on an organization. Thus, increasing employees' understanding of the unacceptability of engaging in racial microaggressions may increase the likelihood that they would identify microaggressions more readily when encountered and view them as personally unacceptable. This increased awareness of the unacceptability of racial microaggressions might push employees towards real-world confrontation behaviors.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations that need to be addressed. First, the items used to assess confrontation intention had low internal consistency within the sample. Low internal consistency is typically due to a low number of questions, poor inter-relatedness between items or heterogenous constructs (Tavakol & Dennik, 2011), and can be problematic because high quality measures are essential for evaluating the reliability of the data supplied by the sample. However, given that confrontation intention is understudied, no other known measure exists. Thus, future research should examine reliable measures of confrontation intention. Second, it is important to consider the appropriateness of the diversity climate measure. The sample consisted primarily of educated, European-American women, thus the diversity climate measure that was used in the

present study may not have been truly reflective of a climate for diversity based on differences in race and ethnicity, and instead may have been reflective of other diverse identities such as gender or generation. Thus, a replication of this study should look to examine if the effect of leadership style on diversity climate is maintained in a sample of visible racial and ethnic minorities and observe how this relationship might influence participants' intent to confront racial microaggressions.

A third limitation of the present study was the sample size. Mediation and moderation analyses require a large sample to conduct an analysis with adequate statistical power to detect an effect size of practical importance. Therefore, future research should look to collect a larger sample of participants to increase power. A fourth limitation of the present study involved the methodology used. Organizational climate and leadership research are often conducted within a single organization or workgroup where subordinates rate their perceptions of their shared supervisor's leadership style, their perceptions of the diversity climate and a particular work outcome. While the present study aimed to minimize the variability of individual work experiences by presenting hypothetical work scenarios, future research should look to control for this variability. Additionally, as discussed above, the effects of the manipulation were mixed and not effective for transactional leadership. A replication of this study would need to ensure that participants differentiate between transformational and transactional leadership styles.

Another limitation of the present study is that it did not account for participants' predisposition to confront based on other individualized factors. It is possible that participants may have been more inclined to confront because they are generally confrontational individuals. Future research should examine whether individualized factors such as personality, and other

personal experiences with microaggressions, influence people's willingness to confront racial microaggressions.

Finally, the present study relied on participants' willingness to provide answers based on hypothetical scenarios. In real-world settings, individuals are not prompted to articulate their perceived "emergency" of the situation or their intention to intervene. Although intervening in active or passive racial discrimination is a prosocial behavior, the actual act of confrontation goes against social norms and requires a level of tolerance for uncertainty. In a real-world situation, the ability to overcome the social consequences of engaging in peer-to-peer confrontation likely diminishes the likelihood that individuals would actually engage in confrontation. Thus, future studies should examine this relationship between leadership style and confrontation intentions using a field experiment where participants can be assessed on their intent to confront when the opportunity truly presents itself.

The present study's findings suggest several additional research directions. First, it is possible that participants felt less inclined to confront because the target was present when the microaggression occurred and when the confrontation behavior would have needed to occur. While no literature to date has examined this relationship, this finding would be consistent with confrontation research which suggests that bystanders of witnessed prejudicial remarks typically view status-based authority figures as most responsible for responding and report feeling less personally responsible when authority figures and targets are present (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2019). Thus, future studies should explore whether individuals would confront the perpetrator of a racial microaggression when the target is present versus when the target is absent.

Second, future research should explore whether enforcing organizational policies that condemn microaggressions in the workplace, and/or transformational supervisors who explicitly

denounce racial microaggressions would affect people's willingness to confront microaggressions. For example, research should be conducted to determine to what extent an organization's stance and the leader's view of the acceptability of microaggressions might impact personal views of the acceptability of microaggressions, and whether personal and/or organizational views, coupled with a positive diversity climate and transformational leadership, might drive individuals towards real-world confrontation behaviors in a workplace setting.

Conclusion

Although the present study did not find a significant relationship between leadership style and confrontation intention, this study is a good starting point in interdisciplinary research linking confrontation intention to attitudes about the acceptability of racial microaggressions, and leadership to diversity climate. Furthermore, the present study's findings highlight the pivotal role that leaders play in facilitating a positive diversity climate. Finally, the present study's findings contributed to confrontation research by showing that confrontation behaviors are predicted by a lower acceptability of racial microaggressions, suggesting a possible avenue for bias intervention training.

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Appendix A-Vignettes

Vignette 1: Leadership Style- Transformational Leadership

- Imagine that you are attending a work meeting. Your supervisor is someone who:
 - Looks to create a vision based on the collective good of their workers and tries to align with the morals and aspirations of their followers
 - Influences your coworkers to envision and work toward future goals by expressing a vision of the future
 - Encourages your coworkers to examine problems from different perspectives, think critically and develop creative solutions
 - Considers you and your coworkers needs and acts as a coach or mentor to you and your coworkers
- For today's meeting, your supervisor states that the goal of an upcoming project is to create a commercial for a new sports drink. Before splitting into groups, your supervisor explains, "The vision for the new commercial is to create an original idea that is both diverse and inclusive. So be innovative and challenge the status quo! Once you've split up into your groups, I will be checking in periodically to see how your plans are shaping up. I want you all to reach your fullest potential, so please let me know what I can do to foster creativity! Also, I know that this is a busy time of the year for everyone but do your best to work within the confines of the workday. I do not want this project to invade your personal time with friends and family."

Vignette 2: Leadership Style- Transactional Leadership

- Imagine that you are attending a work meeting. Your supervisor is someone who:
 - Gives individuals employees positive feedback when they perform well and actively shows their appreciation of employees who do their jobs better than expected
 - Personally compliments employees when they do outstanding work
 - Rewards employees' performance dependent on how well they perform their jobs and/or when they live up to their requirements
 - Points out what employees will receive if they do what is required
 - Gives negative consequences to employees if they perform worse than their colleagues, when employees do not consistently perform as requires, and/or when employees do not meet their requirements
- For today's meeting, your supervisor states that the goal of an upcoming project is to create a commercial for a new sports drink. Before splitting into groups, your supervisor explains, "Our main goal is to create a cost-effective commercial. Given the nature of this task, it is imperative that we create a commercial that is both relatable and enjoyable, while also considering our audience's demographics. As an incentive, the group that pitches the best commercial will receive an additional vacation day! Sports commercials can be difficult to create, so I will be monitoring your groups to help mitigate the occurrence of common mistakes."

Note. Vignettes created by primary researcher

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Measuring Employee's Perception of Their Supervisor's Leadership Style

Instructions

Give your opinion about your supervisor's style using the following scale:

(1) Strongly disagree, (2) Moderately disagree, (3) Neither disagree nor agree, (4) Moderately agree, (5) Strongly agree

1. Makes everyone around them enthusiastic about assignments
2. I have complete faith in them
3. Encourages me to express my ideas and opinions
4. Is an inspiration to us
5. Inspires loyalty to them
6. Inspires loyalty to the organization intellectual stimulation
7. Their ideas have forced me to rethink some of my own ideas, which I never questioned before
8. Enables me to think about old problems in new ways
9. Has provided me to with new ways of looking at things, which used to be a puzzle for me
10. Gives personal attention to members who seem neglected
11. Finds out what I want and tries to help me get it
12. You can count on them to express their appreciation when they do a good job
13. Tells me what to do if I want to be rewarded for my efforts*
14. There is a close agreement between what I am expected to put into the group effort and the benefit I can get out of it*
15. Whenever I feel like it, I can negotiate with them about what I can get from what I accomplish*
16. Asks no more of me than what is absolutely essential to get the work done*
17. It is alright if I take initiative, but they do not encourage me to do so*

18. Only tells me what I have to know to do my job*

*Items are reversed scored

Note. Scale published by Vera, D., & Crossan, M. (2004). Strategic Leadership and Organizational Learning. *The Academy of Management Review*, 29(2), 222.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/20159030>

Appendix C: Diversity Climate Measure

Imagine that you are working with this supervisor and with this company. Please answer the following questions using the following scale (*1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree*):

1. If I were working with this supervisor, I would trust my supervisor and organization to create a climate in which I am treated fairly.
2. If I were working with this supervisor, I believe my supervisor and organization create a climate that maintains a diversity-friendly work environment.
3. If I were working with this supervisor, I believe that my supervisor and organization create a climate in which the views of people like me are respected.
4. If I were working with this supervisor, I believe my supervisor and organization create a climate that demonstrates a visible commitment to diversity.

Note. Measure published by McKay, P. F., Avery, D. R., Tonidandel, S., Morris, M. A., Hernandez, M., & Hebl, M. R. (2007). Racial differences in employee retention: Are diversity climate perceptions the key? *Personnel Psychology*, 60(1), 35–62.

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Appendix D: Microaggression Scenario

You were put into a group with five other co-workers. When the supervisor was working with another group, you witnessed these exchanges within your group:

- **Zion (30-year old, African-American male):** *"The athletes we chose for this campaign are perfect! However, I noticed that most of them are the same race/ethnicity. I think that we should include more athletes of color."*
- **Noah (30-year old, White male):** *"I guess we could, but it doesn't really matter what race the athletes are. There's only one race, the human race."*

Note. Scenario created by primary researcher

Appendix E: Manipulation Check Items

Please answer the following questions based on the scenario:

1. What were the names of the people in your group? (Pick 2)
 - a. [Noah]
 - b. Jessica
 - c. [Zion]
 - d. Michael
2. What are their genders?
 - a. Male and female
 - b. [Two males]
 - c. Two females
3. What are their racial/ethnic group memberships? (Pick 2)
 - a. [Black/African/Afro- American]
 - b. Hispanic/Latino/Latina American
 - c. Asian, Asian American, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
 - d. [European American/Caucasian/White]

Appendix F: CPR Model Items

Use the following scale to indicate your perceptions of the conversation between [perpetrator] and [target]. (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree):

1. [perpetrator's name] statement was motivated by hostility toward people from a different group
2. [perpetrator's name] statement requires an immediate response
3. [perpetrator's name] statement hurt other people
4. Something should be done right away to stop [perpetrator's name] behavior
5. I would personally feel responsible for doing something about [perpetrator's name] behavior
6. It would not be my place to say or do something
7. I would expect someone else to take responsibility for doing something
8. I am unsure how I would respond to this situation
9. I would know what to do in this situation
10. I could think of something appropriate to say
11. I would be worried that I might lose my job if I spoke up
12. I would be worried that my [supervisor/coworker] might be angry if I said something
13. Saying something would be pointless
14. I would talk to my co-worker about the behavior
15. I would do nothing in this situation
16. I would tell an authority about my coworker's behavior

Item Scoring Information

Prejudicial Remark: 1

Emergency: 2-4

Personal Responsibility: 5-6

How to Respond: 7-9

Perceived Costs vs. Benefits: 10-13

Confrontation Intention: 14-16

Note. Measure published by Ashburn-Nardo, L., Blanchar, J. C., Petersson, J., Morris, K. A., & Goodwin, S. A. (2014). Do you say something when it's your boss? The role of perpetrator power in prejudice confrontation. *Journal of Social Issues*, 70, 615–636.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12082>.

Appendix G: Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions Scale (ARMS)

Instructions

Imagine that you are talking with a racially diverse group of peers about various topics, including race and ethnicity. Rate how ACCEPTABLE you think it would be for a White group member to say the following to a racial/ethnic minority group member:

1 (totally unacceptable)

6 (perfectly acceptable)

1. Lots of people worked their way out of poverty, why can't Blacks and Latinos do the same?
2. African Americans would get more jobs if they dressed more professionally.
3. If African Americans spoke less slang, they'd be more likely to get jobs.
4. There won't be racial progress until racial minorities stop relying on handouts from the government.
5. Black people should stop using slavery as an excuse for their problems.
6. Minorities are just too sensitive about racism.
7. Latinos receive lots of unearned benefits just for being minorities.
8. People from your racial group get hired easily because companies need to meet racial quotas.
9. If Latinos spoke more English, they'd be more likely to get jobs.
10. I don't see your race, I see you as a person.
11. I don't care if you're Black, Brown, Purple, Yellow, Green . . . I see all people as the same.
12. There is only one race, the human race.
13. People shouldn't see race anymore.
14. Even if we look different, we are basically the same.
15. I don't notice race.

16. We are all the same.
17. People are just people, their race doesn't matter.
18. Everyone is treated the same by the legal system.
19. Everyone has the same chance to succeed regardless of their race.
20. Everyone gets a fair legal trial regardless of their race.
21. Everyone has access to the same resources such as schools and hospitals.
22. Race doesn't play a role in who gets pulled over by the police.
23. Race doesn't matter for who gets sent to prison.
24. Everyone has access to the same educational opportunities, regardless of race or ethnicity.
25. When people get shot by the police, it is more about what they were doing rather than their race
26. Everyone in life goes through the same kinds of obstacles, regardless of their race.
27. Latinos are just so sexy.
28. Native Americans are so fierce.
29. I just love black women's butts.
30. Latino men are such passionate lovers.
31. You are so exotic.
32. You're so beautiful, you're like a geisha.
33. You're so beautiful, you look like Pocahontas.
34. Your skin color is so exotic.

Test Administration Note

In the studies used to determine the psychometric properties of this measure, the items were *randomly presented* to participants. We therefore recommend randomizing the order of the items in future studies.

Subscale Scoring Information

Victim Blaming: Items 1–9

Color Evasion: Items 10–17

Power Evasion: Items 18–26

Exoticizing: Items 27–34

Note. Measure published by Mekawi, Y., & Todd, N. R. (2018). Okay to say?: Initial validation of the Acceptability of Racial Microaggressions Scale. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 24(3), 346–362. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000201>

Appendix H: Demographics

Please provide the following demographic information:

What is your age (in years)? _____

What is your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ African American/Black
- ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- ☐ Asian, Asian American, Asian Indian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ European American/Caucasian/White
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino/Latina American
- ☐ Multi-racial American
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Current Level of Education

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school
- ☐ Bachelor's Degree
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Ph.D or higher
- ☐ Trade School

What is your biological sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Not Listed (please specify): _____

What is your gender identity?

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Transgender man
- ☐ Transgender woman
- ☐ Gender Non-conforming
- ☐ Not Listed (please specify): _____

What is your sexual orientation?

- ☐ Heterosexual/Straight
- ☐ Homosexual (Gay/Lesbian
- ☐ Bi-sexual
- ☐ Not Listed (please specify): _____

What is your family's socioeconomic status?

- ☐ Upper class
- ☐ High class
- ☐ Middle class
- ☐ Low middle class
- ☐ Lower/Poor class

Appendix I: Informed Consent

College of Sciences and Humanities
Department of Psychological Science
Muncie, IN 47306-0520
Phone: (765) 285-1707



INFORMED CONSENT **(IRB # 1660902-1)**

Study Title

Perceptions of Supervisors and Work Situations

Study Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study is to examine issues of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and understand how people interpret and react to hypothetical scenarios that occur within racially diverse settings. This work is important because past research suggests that employees' experiences in the workplace can affect their personal and professional satisfaction. The results of this study will help us better understand ways to optimize organizational training and assess the impact of work behaviors.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be at least 18 years old.

Participation Procedures and Duration

If you are willing to participate in this online study, you will be asked to read a brief description of a hypothetical work situation and to share your perceptions of the people involved in that interaction. You will also be asked to answer questions about some social issues and you're your own background (e.g., age, gender, year in school, etc.). The study will take 15-25 minutes. Eligible participants will receive ½ psychological science SONA research credit for your participation.

Data Confidentiality or Anonymity

Your responses will be recorded in an anonymous manner. There will be no record of your name kept along with the answers you provide. No one, including the researchers, will be able to link your answers to you.

Storage of Data and Data Retention Period

Your responses will be saved in a password protected, computerized database, which we will keep indefinitely. Only members of the research team will have access to the data.

Risks or Discomforts

The only anticipated risk from participating in this study is that you may not feel comfortable answering some of the questions. You may choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you may quit the study at any time.

Who to Contact Should You Experience Any Negative Effects from Participating in this Study

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line
 - Text "GO" to 741741

Benefits

One benefit you may gain from your participation in this study may be a greater awareness of your thoughts about various social issues.

Voluntary Participation

Taking part in this study is voluntary and entirely up to you. You may stop your participation in this study at any time. Additionally, you do not need to answer any question you feel uncomfortable answering. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email the investigator before beginning the study and at any time during the study.

IRB Contact Information

If you want information about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Director of Research Integrity, Institutional Review Board, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070.

Email: orihelp@bsu.edu

Other Questions or Concerns

Please feel free to contact the principal investigator with any questions or concerns.

Principal Investigator: Venessannah Itugbu, Dept. of Psychological Science, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306; email: vitugbu@bsu.edu.

Faculty Supervisor: Linh Littleford (PhD.), Dept. of Psychological Science, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306; Phone: (765) 285-1707; email: lnlittleford@bsu.edu.

Consent (please check one):

- ☐ I am at least 18 years of age and agree to participate in this study.
- ☐ I am younger than 18 years of age and/or I do not wish to participate in this study.

Appendix J: End of Survey Message

Thank you for your interest in the study. You are being shown this message because you selected that you did not wish to participate in this study and/or you are not at least 18 years of age.

Thank you for your time. If you have questions about this study, please contact:

Principal Investigator: Venessannah Itugbu, Dept. of Psychological Science, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306; email: vitugbu@bsu.edu.

Faculty Supervisor: Linh Littleford (PhD.), Dept. of Psychological Science, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306; Phone: (765) 285-1707; email: lnlittleford@bsu.edu